

“WHY ARE YOU HERE?”

The mail recently brought a small flyer with the question in the title above. The flip-side answers as follows: “You are here to have an eternal relationship with God!” To be Biblically accurate, we are here to serve and glorify God so that we can enjoy an eternal relationship with Him in Heaven (Mat. 6:33; 22: 37–38; 1 Cor. 15:58; et al.).

The flyer then states: “Here’s how...,” and proceeds to list four “steps,” each followed by a verse of Scripture. These four steps purport to be the means of bringing a sinner to salvation in Christ. This suggest-ed “plan” is typical of Protestant sermons and publications. Since no-thing is more important than one’s salvation, we will do well to exam-ine these steps in light of Scripture.

Step 1. Admit your sin—“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). **Observation:** Unarguably, unless one is convinced he is a sinner in need of God’s saving grace, he will never seek salvation and cannot be saved.

Step 2. Put your trust in Jesus—“God loves us so much that He gave us His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not die, but will have everlasting life” (John 3:16). **Observation:** Although a strange rendering of this beloved, familiar passage, it still conveys the fact that man must believe in Christ in order to have eternal life. No argument on “Step 2.”

Step 3. Make your decision—“If you confess with your mouth that ‘Jesus is Lord!’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). **Observation:** Agreed, although it is necessary to believe in the resurrected Christ, that is insufficient. One must also con-fess one’s faith orally in order to be saved.

Step 4. Now turn from your sin—“Repent, then turn to God so that your sins will be forgiven” (Acts 3:19). **Observation:** Here and in many other passages, the New Testament requires repentance of all who would be saved. The flyer then indicates that upon completing “Step 4,” one can say, “I have now received the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior....”

This “plan” notably omits Step 5, the necessary act of baptism. The Lord placed it before salvation (Mark 16:16). Peter placed it before remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and said it saves us (1 Pet. 3:21). Ananias identified it as the act in which sins are washed away (Acts 22:16). Paul taught that only those who are baptized into Christ are saved (Rom. 6:3–4; Gal. 3:27).

We do not question the sincerity of those who distributed the 4-step “plan,” but they are nonetheless wrong—fatally wrong.

—Dub McClish
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